

To the High Court of PARLIAMENT of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Dominions thereunto belonging.

*The humble Petition of divers, in behalfe of themselves, and about fiftene hundred others (necessitous Publike-faith-lenders) inhabiting in and about London (whom lesse then fifty thousand pounds will fully satisfie and) who are altogether unable to double what they have lent.*

*Most humbly sheweth,*



That your Petitioners did in the years 1641, 1642, 1643, 1644, &c. lend several sums of money, &c. upon the credit and Faith of the Nation (according to the Propositions, &c.) at the requests, and earnest desires of the Parliament, in their greatest necessities.

That through their good affection to the well-being of their native Countrey, they were carried forth to lend (not only so timely, but also) so largely (in which they were Exemplary to the whole Nation (not doubting to have had it againe in a very short time) that they thereby made themselves altogether unable to double, (as others did that lent sparingly (though far better able) whereby many have been utterly dispoyled of their trades and livelihoods, many become prisoners, others (in abundance) in hourly fear of becoming such, hundreds so poor, they have not bread (of their owne) to eat, but are supported either by friends, Parishes, &c.

That they have not been wanting any time this seven years to make known the sad effects of their said want thereof unto the Parliaments, the Councel of State, and to the Lord Protector, and his Councel, but (to their great grief and encrease of their misery) all hath hitherto proved little more then fruitlesse cost and labour.

That according to an Act of the 7. of October 1653. they have presented their claims to their said several summes before the Commissioners therein named, in whose custody they yet remaine.

That your Petitioners are not at all against general satisfaction, (but should greatly rejoyce to see it effected) only (fearing it will prove a hard work to be done at once, and) knowing their own necessities to be so unsupportable, and themselves so forward, and timely appearers both in person and purse; they desire they may be taken care for, and clearly paid off in the first place,

*Therefore they are most humble and earnest Sutors unto your Honours, that you would be pleased now to take their sad and distressed condition into your most serious and Christian consideration; to settle some speedy and effectual way for paying your Petitioners their said summes (and the interest thereof,) so shall you take away the great reproach the credit of the Nation yet lies under, the common derision your Petitioners have long undergone (by such as have greatly rejoyced to see them thus become poor) set many prisoners at liberty, inable hundreds to keep and keep up their credits and callings, many to eat their own bread, that now live upon others charity, the ablest amongst them to pay their debts, and the whole body of them, their poor wives and children to pray for your Honours temporal and eternal prosperity.*

*Reasons, Arguments, or Motives humbly offered to the consideration of the said High Court, and every individual Member thereof, on the behalf, and for the primary, and distinct (satisfying of the said Petitioners, viz.*

1. Because they, &c. in and about London were alwayes the first lenders, and most forward appearers upon every streight and occasion, and were in that respect the great wheele that (by example) moved all the rest in the Countreies that lent any thing at all.

2. Because men in and about London (and in particular, your said Petitioners,) did lend much more in proportion (as well as more timely and frequently) then any others; as being at the very elbow of, and daily conversant with the Members of that Parliament; and under the powerful Ministry of such, as used all their utmost abilities to perswade men to lend, and take Armes for the Parliament; all which were as so much fuel heaped upon the fire of their good affection, which joyned with hopes of sure and speedy repayment, carried them forth to lend above, and beyond their abilities.

3. Because that they, their sons, servants, &c. in and about London, were none of the least part of the first Army, nor of recruiting the after Armies, whensoever broken by the enemies, which caused them to say, It is in vaine for us to fight any longer, unless London be burnt or destroyed; for let us beat their Armies as oft as we will, yet that cursed City still sends forth more.

4. Because they humbly conceive their said active forward affectionis not to be equalized in all the Land; for no where else is any to be found, that (like the Widow) threw in all they had; or of such as took up money at interest (and pay interest for it still,) on purpose to lend it to the Parliament; or of hundreds that lent a 4, and 3d part, or half of their whole estates voluntarily.

5. Because they have been so greatly instrumental in many kinds, to advance the Common Cause owned by the Parliament, viz. in their constant readinesse upon all occasions (even at the very beck of the Parliament) with their own horse, armes, &c. to move into the adjacent Countreies, &c. to seize the Armes or persons, &c. of such as appeared enemies; as also by their unwearied activeness amongst their neighbours, to rectifie their affection, perswade them to lend, or give money, &c. and at all meetings and places in the years 1642, 1643, &c. where any way or means for publike good or safety was intended, debated, &c. about forming and raising the Auxiliaries, in arming and encouraging them; in fortifying the Cities of London, Westminster, &c. and in guarding the Parliament, Tower, Forts, &c. and many going into the Army, and all this at their own charge; by all which wayes and occasions, they exceedingly hindered themselves in their callings, (by losse of time, and expence of much money, and some lost them quite,) and so

were utterly undone; and besides, they have owned and stood close by the said Cause in the greatest straits and worst of times.

6. Being tradesmen, and lending beyond their abilities (as aforesaid) to answer the oft and earnest desires of Parliament, they have exceedingly wanted their money ever since to manage their callings, and some forced either to leave them quite off (for want of money) or deale upon credit, as well as they could; and being so forced to buy hard penny-worths, they are over-topt with young ones (who having great stocks (as never lending any thing) and your said Petitioners small ones, they even eat them out, and get their trading and customers from them; and besides, some are grown so old, and so cast down with grief (that they should be so long kept from their said money in their so great necessities) that they are not able to work or look after their trades as formerly; many are shut up close in prisons, and hundreds more ready to be haled in daily after them, and therefore have the more need of their money.

7. Because they have had many verbal and printed promises of Parliament, of setting some eminent marks of honour upon the Citizens of London, for their unparalleled, large and voluntary Lones, &c. none of which have beene made good unto your Petitioners, (and therefore they desire to be paid their said summes in the first place, and they shall take that as honour enough, and forget all the rest) but rather the contrary hath befallen them; for hitherto London (within the freedom) bears the fifteenth part of the Taxes of all England, (of which the Petitioners have borne the more by reason of their first forwardnesse; many of them not daring since to aske any ease (as living altogether upon their credits, lest their weak estates should be discovered, and so be utterly undone) which is so great a disproportion, that one that lives within, of equal estate with one that lives without the freedome, is taxed at six pence for the others penny; and in that heave Tax of 10000. li. per week, the 50 Subsidies, fortification money, &c. which were laid upon London only, and no where else: also the Excise, which is little or nothing to most Countrey men, though of great estates; but lies very heave upon many Artificers, traders, &c. in London, though of very meane estates; all which hath caused many of the ablest Citizens to leave the Citie, and take houses in the Suburbs, or some few miles off, to avoid the said burthens; which those that stay behinde are necessitated to bear till they sink quite down under them.

8. Because the Parliament did promise and declare, that none that were forced to lend, should be paid till all that willingly lent was first paid.

9. Because they promised and declared, that none should be neglected or slighted, (that faithfully stood to the said Cause, (as your Petitioners have done) but should be thankfully rewarded, to their own honour, and the good of their posterity: they onely desire that which is properly due unto them without further honour, and therefore hope they shall certainly be provided for by your honours.

10. Because it seemes (to them) very unlikely, that Gentlemen, Yeomen, &c. in the Countreies (who generally lent sparingly,) or townsmen, (unlesse one perhaps of hundreds) should have the like need of their money with your Petitioners, who have spent seven or eight years time in seeking after it, and the others in 11. or 12. years neither seeking nor petitioning for it; but if any be so necessitous there, they do heartily wish and desire their speedy satisfaction.

11. Because as it hath already been very great, so it is certain it will be much greater hurt to them if they be kept longer from their said money; whereas to rich men, or such as can double, it will be no dammage at all to stay a little longer, (because you are to give them interest all the time it is out) and it may be some would put it to interest elsewhere, if they had it, as having no use for it themselves.

12. Because they have been so long Petitioners (have amongst them spent so great a quantity of money, and so much precious time, in seeking after, and petitioning for it,) and that they do again most earnestly pray that they may be provided for: they may be eased from their long, cold, hungry, grievous and wearisome journeyes and attendance in seeking for it; which hath been so prejudicial to many of them, that it had been mercy in the Parliament, to have told them at the first, that they would not have paid them at all, rather then to have put them off from time to time to the ruine of many already, and of abundance more if not speedily prevented by your Honours effectual providing for their satisfaction.

In answer to that old and common objection, (by which some have hitherto hindered your Petitioners satisfaction) viz. that the Parliament must be just, and do things without partiality, and therefore may not provide for them before they provide for all lenders in general.) They answer, it is not counted unjust, or partial for any private man, that holds money at interest, of several people, to pay some of them their money in, and continue to owe the others their money longer, at the same rates and securities as before: and further they answer, that it was not accounted unjust or partial, to borrow it of one before another; nor in one man to lend his money, &c. or appear before another; for then no mans money, or appearance was turned back, because his rich or politick-lending neighbours, were not come along with them: nor was there any that foretold the middling or poorer sort of people, that they must keep enough to be able afterward to double what they then lent; nor was the meanest, or most zealous, called in question, why they lent so much, or so often; and therefore they hope your Honours will hearken to no such dishonourable objections, but go on to pay your said Petitioners in the first place, and the rest as soone as it may be done.